

International comparisons of educational attainment, by age

The percentage of the population completing secondary and higher education in different countries may be used to compare the skill level of the U.S. work force to that of our economic competitors. Additionally, contrasting the educational attainment of the general population to the attainment of younger age cohorts provides a means of comparing progress in the rates of high school and college completion.

- A similar or higher percentage of 25- to 64-year-olds in the United States completed secondary and higher education compared to their counterparts in Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Canada.
- Individuals 25 to 34 years old in Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Canada completed secondary education at rates similar to their counterparts in the United States.
- The similarity of completion rates among the younger generation (those ages 25–34) indicates that the other countries have essentially caught up to the United States in the percentage of their populations completing secondary education.
- Females ages 25–34 in the United States were much more likely to complete higher education than females and males of the same age group in other large industrialized countries (with the exception of males ages 25–34 in Japan).
- Males ages 25–34 in Japan were much more likely to complete higher education than males of the same age group in the other large industrialized countries. Males of the same age in the United

Percentage of the population in large industrialized countries who completed secondary and higher education, by age, sex, and country: 1995

Country	25–34 years old						25–64 years old	
	Total		Male		Female		Total	
	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education
Canada	83.9	19.5	82.4	19.2	85.4	19.7	75.2	17.0
France	85.5	14.0	87.3	13.7	83.8	14.3	68.4	10.7
Germany	88.9	12.5	91.0	13.7	86.7	11.3	83.7	12.9
Italy	49.1	8.2	46.9	7.8	51.2	8.6	34.9	7.9
Japan ²	90.6	22.9	89.3	34.2	91.8	11.5	69.7	13.3
United Kingdom	86.1	14.8	87.5	16.3	84.7	13.1	75.9	12.4
United States	87.1	25.0	86.1	25.1	88.2	24.9	85.8	25.3

¹ Includes individuals who have completed at least secondary education.

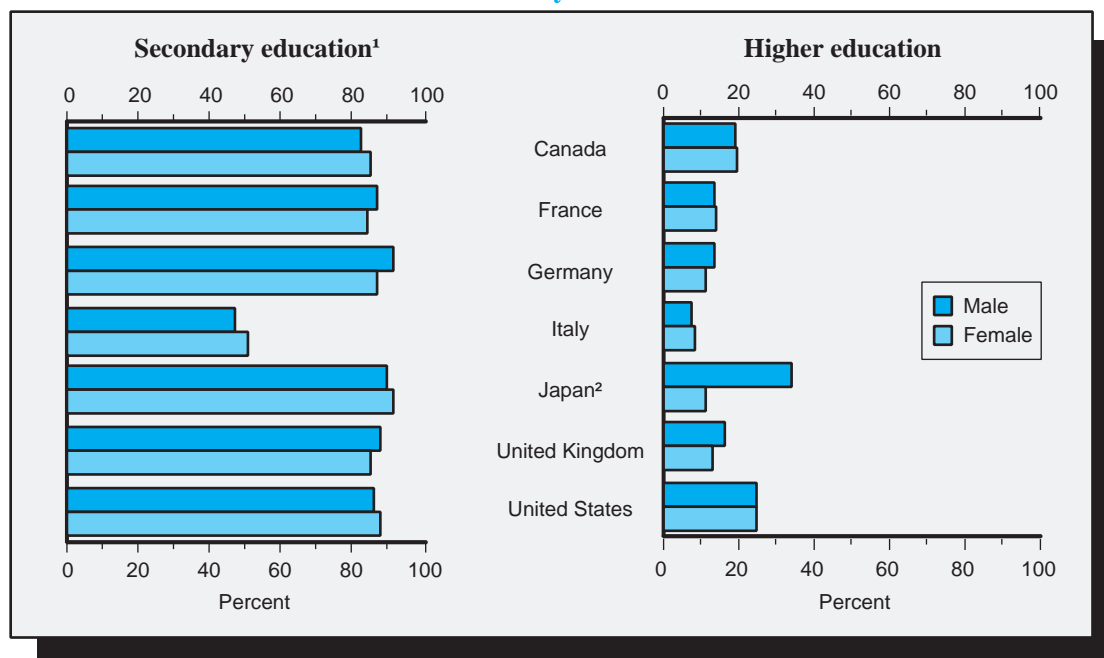
² Data are for 1989.

NOTE: In the United States, completing secondary education is defined as graduating from high school or earning a GED; completing higher education is defined as earning a bachelor's degree or higher.

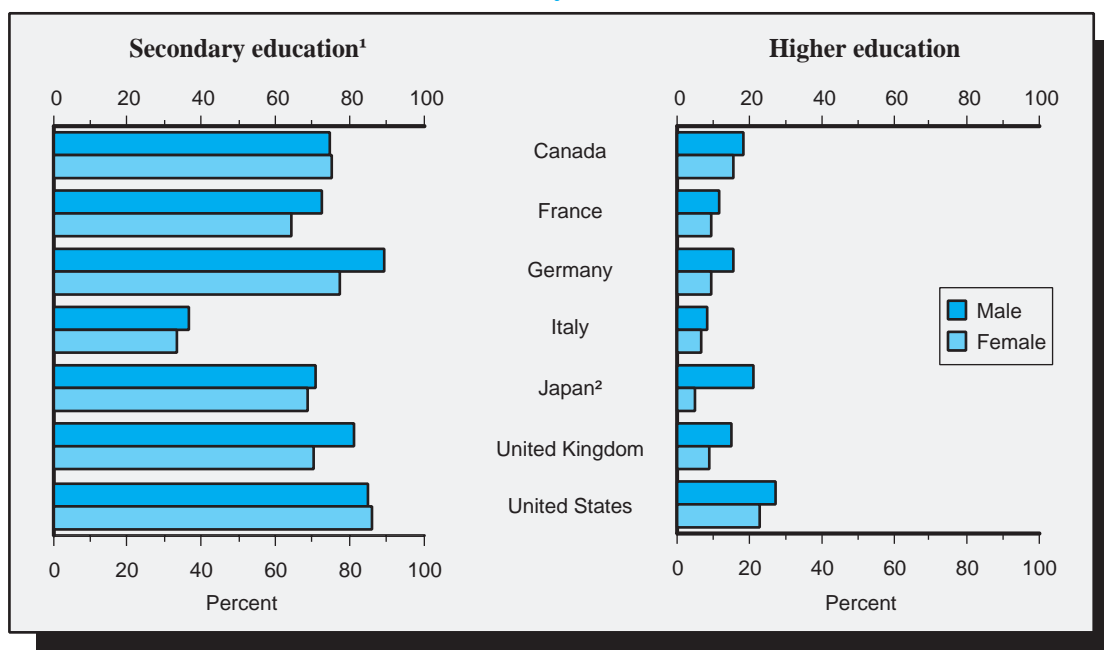
SOURCE: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, INES Project, International Indicators Project.

Percentage of the population in large industrialized countries who completed secondary and higher education, by age, sex, and country: 1995

25–34 years old



25–64 years old



¹ Includes individuals who have completed at least secondary education.

² Data are for 1989.

NOTE: In the United States, completing secondary education is defined as graduating from high school or earning a GED; completing higher education is defined as earning a bachelor's degree or higher.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, INES Project, International Indicators Project.

Table 23-1 Percentage of the population who completed secondary and higher education, by sex, country, and age: 1995

Country	Total		Male		Female	
	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education
25-64 years old						
Large industrialized countries						
Canada	75.2	17.0	74.9	18.4	75.5	15.6
France	68.4	10.7	72.8	11.8	64.2	9.6
Germany	83.7	12.9	89.6	16.1	77.6	9.6
Italy	34.9	7.9	36.7	8.8	33.2	7.0
Japan ²	69.7	13.3	70.9	21.5	68.5	5.2
United Kingdom	75.9	12.4	81.4	15.4	70.5	9.4
United States	85.8	25.3	85.3	27.7	86.3	23.0
Other countries						
Australia	52.8	13.8	63.7	14.6	41.9	12.9
Austria	69.5	5.9	77.0	7.4	61.8	4.3
Belgium	53.5	11.0	54.3	13.9	52.6	8.1
Czech Republic	83.4	10.6	90.1	13.1	76.7	8.2
Denmark	65.5	15.0	69.5	15.6	61.3	14.3
Finland	65.4	11.5	64.5	13.1	66.2	9.9
Greece	42.5	11.5	45.0	13.0	40.2	10.1
Ireland	47.2	10.1	43.6	11.3	50.7	8.8
Korea	59.8	18.1	69.5	23.9	49.8	12.2
Luxembourg ³	29.3	11.4	33.5	14.7	25.0	8.1
Netherlands	61.2	22.0	66.8	24.9	55.5	18.9
New Zealand	59.1	10.2	64.2	12.0	54.0	8.5
Norway	81.2	17.6	81.6	18.2	80.7	17.0
Poland	73.7	9.9	76.3	10.1	71.2	9.8
Portugal	20.1	7.5	19.6	7.9	20.5	7.1
Spain	28.0	11.8	30.3	12.0	25.8	11.6
Sweden	74.7	14.3	73.0	15.0	76.4	13.6
Switzerland	82.2	8.8	88.7	11.9	75.8	5.7
Turkey	23.0	8.4	25.7	9.7	19.5	6.6
25-34 years old						
Large industrialized countries						
Canada	83.9	19.5	82.4	19.2	85.4	19.7
France	85.5	14.0	87.3	13.7	83.8	14.3
Germany	88.9	12.5	91.0	13.7	86.7	11.3
Italy	49.1	8.2	46.9	7.8	51.2	8.6
Japan ²	90.6	22.9	89.3	34.2	91.8	11.5
United Kingdom	86.1	14.8	87.5	16.3	84.7	13.1
United States	87.1	25.0	86.1	25.1	88.2	24.9

Table 23-1 Percentage of the population who completed secondary and higher education, by sex, country, and age: 1995—Continued

Country	Total		Male		Female	
	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education
25–34 years old						
Other countries						
Australia	57.4	14.3	66.8	14.2	48.2	14.5
Austria	80.6	6.5	84.8	7.3	76.0	5.6
Belgium	69.8	14.8	67.4	15.8	72.3	13.7
Czech Republic	91.3	11.8	92.4	13.3	90.1	10.2
Denmark	73.6	15.2	73.6	14.6	73.5	15.8
Finland	82.7	12.8	81.0	13.5	84.6	12.1
Greece	63.9	15.5	62.9	14.0	64.8	16.8
Ireland	63.7	13.0	58.6	13.0	68.9	13.0
Korea	86.5	28.8	89.1	33.6	83.7	23.8
Luxembourg ³	32.3	11.5	32.8	13.0	31.8	9.9
Netherlands	70.3	24.5	70.0	24.8	70.7	24.2
New Zealand	63.9	11.8	67.6	13.9	60.4	9.8
Norway	88.4	19.9	87.1	17.4	89.8	22.4
Poland	88.2	9.9	87.1	9.1	89.4	10.8
Portugal	31.0	10.0	27.2	8.6	34.6	11.3
Spain	47.2	17.9	45.6	15.2	48.8	20.6
Sweden	88.0	12.6	86.8	12.6	89.2	12.5
Switzerland	88.4	9.8	91.3	12.0	85.3	7.5
Turkey	26.4	7.5	30.1	8.2	22.5	6.8
35–44 years old						
Large industrialized countries						
Canada	80.5	17.9	79.3	18.8	81.6	16.9
France	74.4	11.1	79.1	12.1	69.8	10.1
Germany	87.8	16.4	91.6	19.5	83.9	13.2
Italy	42.5	10.6	44.2	11.5	40.8	9.8
Japan ²	77.0	14.5	77.0	23.6	77.0	5.4
United Kingdom	80.2	14.7	85.1	18.3	75.3	11.1
United States	88.4	26.6	87.6	28.0	89.1	25.3
Other countries						
Australia	54.5	16.5	66.9	17.5	42.2	15.5
Austria	73.1	7.4	80.5	9.1	65.3	5.6
Belgium	57.7	11.9	57.5	15.3	57.9	8.5
Czech Republic	85.6	11.1	91.2	13.3	80.0	8.8
Denmark	69.8	17.6	74.1	17.3	65.3	17.8
Finland	73.6	13.3	71.3	14.4	75.9	12.1
Greece	50.2	14.2	51.8	16.4	48.6	12.2
Ireland	51.0	10.8	47.6	12.5	54.3	9.2
Korea	60.6	16.5	71.2	23.5	49.3	9.0
Luxembourg ³	33.5	14.0	37.8	17.5	29.0	10.4
Netherlands	65.3	24.8	70.0	27.9	60.3	21.6
New Zealand	63.8	11.5	67.7	12.8	59.9	10.3
Norway	85.6	21.2	85.3	21.3	85.9	21.0
Poland	81.7	9.7	82.1	9.5	81.3	9.9
Portugal	24.0	9.8	22.9	10.2	24.9	9.5
Spain	32.0	13.7	34.7	13.7	29.3	13.7
Sweden	80.5	15.8	77.6	17.0	83.5	14.6
Switzerland	84.5	10.4	89.1	13.2	79.8	7.5
Turkey	23.2	9.1	26.9	10.9	18.2	6.6

Table 23-1 Percentage of the population who completed secondary and higher education, by sex, country, and age: 1995—Continued

Country	Total		Male		Female	
	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education	Secondary education ¹	Higher education
45-54 years old						
Large industrialized countries						
Canada	71.4	17.3	72.0	20.0	70.8	14.5
France	62.0	10.2	67.2	12.3	56.7	8.2
Germany	83.8	13.9	90.1	18.9	77.3	8.8
Italy	27.8	7.9	31.9	9.4	23.8	6.4
Japan ²	59.6	9.1	62.4	15.8	56.9	2.5
United Kingdom	71.6	10.9	78.8	14.9	64.4	6.9
United States	86.2	28.0	86.1	32.7	86.4	23.6
Other countries						
Australia	51.5	13.5	62.3	14.5	40.3	12.4
Austria	65.8	5.4	74.1	7.7	57.5	3.1
Belgium	47.4	10.0	50.2	14.0	44.5	5.9
Czech Republic	82.5	10.6	90.3	13.2	75.0	8.0
Denmark	64.3	15.2	68.9	17.0	59.5	13.3
Finland	58.6	11.8	57.6	14.2	59.6	9.4
Greece	33.7	10.1	37.7	12.4	29.8	7.9
Ireland	36.3	8.7	33.6	10.8	39.1	6.5
Korea	39.1	10.6	53.0	15.7	24.7	5.3
Luxembourg ³	27.8	12.4	34.3	17.2	21.2	7.4
Netherlands	55.9	21.0	64.8	25.8	46.5	15.9
New Zealand	54.8	9.5	61.1	11.7	48.4	7.3
Norway	78.9	16.3	79.6	19.0	78.0	13.3
Poland	67.9	11.7	71.7	12.4	64.2	11.1
Portugal	15.9	6.1	17.1	7.4	14.8	5.0
Spain	17.9	8.9	22.5	11.1	13.4	6.8
Sweden	68.6	16.5	66.5	17.2	70.8	15.8
Switzerland	79.4	7.9	88.0	12.2	70.8	3.7
Turkey	20.5	10.3	22.7	12.0	16.7	7.4

¹ Includes individuals who had completed at least secondary education.² Data are for 1989.³ Data are for 1996.

NOTE: In the United States, completing secondary education is defined as graduating from high school or earning a GED; completing higher education is defined as earning a bachelor's degree or higher.

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